

Support SB 568 [Senator Lowenthal]

Ban on Expanded Polystyrene Foam Take-out Food Packaging



The Problem: Expanded polystyrene foam (EPS) food-ware- often but inaccurately referred to as Styrofoam® - is pervasive in the environment. It is extremely damaging throughout its lifecycle and is rarely recycled. It is often mistaken for food by birds, fish and other wildlife.

The environment is inundated with foam. EPS is lightweight and breaks apart easily. It escapes litter cleanup and is widely dispersed on land and in waterways. EPS comprises 15% of storm drain litter and comprises 71% of the plastic debris flowing through the L.A. and San Gabriel Rivers to the Pacific Ocean. It's prevalent on beaches, causes flooding in storm drains, and degrades neighborhoods and parks.

Workers in polystyrene products manufacturing are exposed to many harmful chemicals, including Styrene, Toluene, Xylene, Acetone, Methyl Chloride, and Methyl Ketone. Occupational exposure to Styrene increases risk of lymphoma, leukemia, lung tumors, pancreatic cancer, urinary bladder cancer, prostate cancer, and colorectal cancer. High rates of neurotoxicological effects have been reported in workers. If the California foam food-ware manufacturers, Dart and Pactiv, really cared about workers, they'd only make the less-toxic food-ware that they already manufacture in other facilities.

Public health is threatened by the use of polystyrene food containers. Styrene migrates from the containers into food and beverages when heated or in contact with fatty or acidic foods. Styrene residues are found in 100% of all samples of human fat tissue- every American is exposed through food and packaging. According to the federal government, Styrene is a carcinogen in lab animal testing and "reasonably anticipated to be a human carcinogen."

Local jurisdictions spend millions cleaning litter. Caltrans spends approximately \$60 million a year to remove litter and debris from roadsides and highways, The County of Los Angeles (L.A.) spends \$18 million annually on litter cleanup and education. Southern CA jurisdictions that have to comply with state storm water regulations to get their trash discharges to zero have already spent billions of taxpayer dollars controlling, capturing, and removing trash. Foam pieces, however, are hard to capture or contain.

Jobs will not be lost. Dart and Pactiv are the only foam container manufacturers in California and both make non-foam food ware in the state. Demand for green packaging currently exceeds demand for foam and SB 568 will increase demand for alternatives. Any lost jobs will be replaced in California factories that produce non-foam products, like Fold-Pak, Hutamachi, Peninsula Packaging, C & F Foods, International Paper, and Biosphere Products. Even Dart's Solo products and Pactiv's paper plates are made in California.

There are similarly-priced alternatives (see chart on reverse side). Many restaurants, like Starbucks, use non-foam containers and have for a long time. Cold Stone Creamery stopped using foam in 2011. McDonald's is phasing out foam hot cups. Since 64 California jurisdictions have already implemented bans on EPS, many businesses have already switched. They can find comparably priced and even cheaper alternatives. Local governments enforcing local bans are getting very few complaints about the cost.

Recycling is not the answer. Research shows that most foam collected curbside in California actually goes to landfill. Polystyrene containers are rarely recycled because it's not cost effective. Food contaminated containers can't be recycled, unless they are washed. Once washed, densified, and transported to a recycler, the material is donated not sold- there is no market value- taxpayers foot the bill for recycling. Besides, most litterers don't bring materials to a recycling facility, so recycling foam won't eliminate the litter.

The Solution: SB 568 will eliminate a devastating source of marine plastic pollution.

Citations and sources available on request. For more information, visit www.cleanwater.org/ca or call us at (415) 369-9170

Polystyrene Foam Take-Out Packaging and Price Comparable Alternatives

Clean Water Action – Updated July 2012

	Polystyrene Product	Unit Cost	Non-Foam Product	Unit Cost	Cost Difference
10 oz Cup					
Cold Cup	Foam - Dart Container 1000 ct \$20.20	\$0.02	Plastic - Dart Container 2500 ct \$60.96	\$0.02	\$0.00
Hot Cup	Foam - Dart Container 1000 ct \$20.20	\$0.02	Paper - Choice 1000 ct \$36.53	\$0.04	\$0.02
12 oz Cup					
Cold Cup	Foam - Dart Container 1000 ct \$22.09	\$0.02	Plastic - Dart Container 1000 ct \$24.90	\$0.02	\$0.00
Hot Cup	Foam - Dart Container 1000 ct \$22.09	\$0.02	Paper - Choice 1000 ct \$40.39	\$0.04	\$0.02
16 oz cup					
Cold Cup	Foam - Dart Container 1000 ct \$31.91	\$0.03	Plastic - Dart Container 1000 ct \$35.37	\$0.03	\$0.00
Hot Cup	Foam - Dart Container 1000 ct \$31.91	\$0.03	Paper - Choice 1000 ct \$44.03	\$0.04	\$0.01
12 oz Bowl					
	Foam - Dart Container 500 ct \$17.63	\$0.03	Plastic - Genpak 1000ct \$48.99	\$0.05	\$0.02
16 oz Bowl					
	Foam - Dart Container 500 ct \$19.65	\$0.04	Plastic - Genpak 1000ct \$63.99	\$0.06	\$0.02
6" Plate					
	Foam - Dart Container 1000 ct \$13.08	\$0.01	Paper - AJM Packaging 1000 ct \$7.53	\$0.007	\$0.00
9" Plate					
	Foam - Dart Container 500 ct \$19.37	\$0.04	Paper - AJM Packaging 1000 ct \$11.49	\$0.01	(-\$0.03)
6" Hinge Container					
	Foam - Dart Container 500 ct \$17.13	\$0.03	Plastic - Dart 500ct \$28.18	\$0.06	\$0.03
9" Hinge Container					

	Foam - Dart Container 200 ct \$12.64	\$0.06	Plastic – Duralock 250ct	\$25.94	\$0.10	\$0.04
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All prices from The WEBstaurant Store www.webstaurantstore.com

*Lower prices (up to %25 less) may be found by purchasing through cooperative purchasing

<http://greentownlosaltos.org/programs/business-co-op/>